

## Vision Statement for the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan

***This Vision and the vision statements that introduce each chapter reflect the intended focus of Talbot County land use decision-making.***

The primary goal of Talbot County's Comprehensive Plan is to preserve the quality of life and rural character while protecting the health, safety and well-being of its citizens. Recognizing that the overall environment is an economic asset of the County, protection of our agricultural lands and waterways, and their harvests, is a high priority. Our rivers, creeks, 600 miles of shoreline and fragile ecosystems are valued and protected with zeal and vigilance. The high quality of the County's infrastructure (including schools, roads, and sewer and water) is maintained as the County's needs change and grow. The livability and economic vitality of our towns, along with our historical treasures and cultural amenities, are highly valued.

Talbot County affords those who live here an unusually high quality of life. Our comprehensive planning, our land use decisions, and our growth management strategies are all completely oriented to sustaining and enhancing this remarkable place "where land and water intertwine." To handle the development pressure in Talbot County we blend state-of-the-art planning tools, strong coordination with and support of our municipalities, and effective legislation to ensure that the quality of life associated with our rural character is maintained. We cooperate fully with other counties in the midshore area in dealing with common concerns that cross county lines.

Measurably positive results are required and Talbot County's progress toward achieving the vision is monitored. A monitoring program compares baseline data and the goals and objectives of the plan, against actual and proposed land use changes.

## Definitions

**Designated Growth Areas** are those areas identified in this plan and the County Zoning Ordinance as anticipated for major subdivision and development within the planning period. These are adjacent to incorporated towns and are bounded by town boundaries and the County's Countryside Preservation (CP) zoning designation.

**Infill and Redevelopment** Infill in Talbot County consists of minor development projects within existing developed areas. Redevelopment means building or rebuilding on parcels that have been previously developed. Typical examples will be vacant lots in rural villages, replacement of deficient buildings and adaptive reuse of obsolete structures.

As defined by the Maryland Department of Planning, infill in a rural village is characterized by new envelopment on vacant parcels typical in size and shape to developed parcels in the community.

**Population Centers** are areas settled at a substantially greater concentration than the surrounding land, consisting of a mix of residential and non-residential uses and community services. Incorporated towns are all population centers, as are those rural villages with the greatest populations, widest diversity of land uses, and the presence of public facilities.

**Quality of Life** is a condition of one's existence that can be affected by the land use decisions based on this Comprehensive Plan. For the purpose of this document, quality of life includes:

- abundant fields and forests, wildlife, clean water in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries;
- clean air, sufficient potable water in our aquifers;
- a low level of crime;
- the relative absence of traffic congestion and excessive noise;
- a diversity of economic and employment opportunities for individuals and businesses;
- good educational, social and community service systems;
- an adequate supply of housing opportunities for residents of all ages and incomes;
- access to diverse cultural, recreational, and entertainment activities;
- convenient access to goods and services; and
- an ethic of personal involvement.

**Rural Character** is a predominance of farm fields and woodlands; the visible presence of wildlife; an abundance of thriving rivers, streams and wetlands; large, open spaces separating functional towns and villages; low speed roadways which are uncongested; access to farms and other private properties; a minimum of light clutter in the night skies; the absence of strip malls or retail outlets bearing large and prominent names or logos on their exteriors; and large commercial or residential development.

**Vision Statement** is a statement that communicates a compelling vision of the future, is critical to implementing strategy, and that answers the question 'What will success look like in the effective implementation of the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan?'